

**Iowa Department of Natural Resources
Natural Resource Commission**

ITEM

7

DECISION

TOPIC

DNR Land Acquisition Project Approval

1. Elinor Bedell State Park, Dickinson County -- Eric and Kelly Hoien, Michael and Susan Hoien, Rebecca Hoien Fortis and Bill Fortis

The Natural Resource Commission's approval is requested accept the donation of a parcel of land, located in Dickinson County, adjacent to Elinor Bedell State Park. Eric and Kelly Hoien, Michael and Susan Hoien, Rebecca Hoien Fortis and Bill Fortis offer to donate the 42.74 foot x 33 foot parcel the DNR.

This property is adjacent to the west side of Elinor Bedell State Park where the DNR maintains a bike trail. After recent property transactions in the vicinity, it was determined that part of the park trail lays on this property. The Hoien family held back this parcel from a larger conveyance knowing that the issue of the trail location and the problems that could potentially arise. The have very generously agreed to donate the property to the DNR thereby alleviating the risk future property boundary issues.

This acquisition will become part of the 91-acre Elinor Bedell State Park and will be managed by the Conservation and Recreation Division in accord with the area management plan.

Staff recommends approval of the land acquisition.

2. Conservation Easement, Hamilton County -- David and Annette Volkers

The Natural Resource Commission's approval is requested to accept a conservation easement on 93 acres (more or less) in Hamilton County. This easement shall serve to protect primarily wooded land that is adjacent to DNR land that is part of the Boone Forks WMA. David and Annette Volkers of rural Stratford, IA offer the donation of this easement.

Dan Kinsinger negotiated this easement.

The property is located approximately 6-miles northwest of Stanhope, IA and adjoins the south edge of the Boone Forks WMA. The land is a mix of steep rolling timber, Boone River bluffs, a building site and 14 acres of tillable land that is currently enrolled in WRP for 15-years. The WRP has been seeded to native prairie species. The Boone River runs through the north portion of the property.

The Volkens are conservation minded and want to protect their land for future generations. The easement will allow for at least one building envelope that will include the current dwelling and building site.

The conservation easement will be monitored through a joint effort of River Programs and Wildlife personnel.

No survey costs are anticipated. In the event that there is a future need for surveying it would be at the expense of the Department. The cost of a certified real estate appraisal to serve as a basis for the value of the development rights given up by the encumbrance of the conservation easement along with incidental closing costs will also be the responsibility of the Department.

Staff recommends approval of the conservation easement acquisition.

3. Upper Iowa River Wildlife Management Area, Winneshiek County – Mark and Lynn Krivachek

The Natural Resource Commission's approval is requested for a land exchange involving the Nature Conservancy (TNC), private landowners Mark and Lynn Krivachek and the DNR.

Dan Kinsinger negotiated the exchange. Terry Haindfield, Wildlife Biologist, was instrumental in developing positive relationships with all of the landowners involved.

The exchange property is located about 3-miles southeast of Bluffton in Winneshiek County, Iowa. The first request is for the NRC to accept the donation from TNC of a 16' wide strip of land totaling .78 acres that is the TNC access to the east portion of their land.

The second request is for approval of the transfer of the .78 acre TNC donation to Mark and Lynn Krivachek. The Krivacheks will in exchange provide the DNR a 16' wide permanent easement for access across a different portion of their land. TNC will also have the right to use the DNR access easement. This access will be for DNR personnel and land tenant use only and not for use by the public.

This exchange benefits the DNR in several ways. First, it will formalize a mutual verbal arrangement that has the DNR crossing Krivachek land that is not under recorded easement. Second, it will enhance the potential for the DNR to acquire a landlocked 2.19 acre in holding with Upper Iowa River frontage that is owned by the Krivacheks. All parties are in agreement that this exchange is mutually beneficial.

There are no anticipated survey costs. Incidental closing costs will be the responsibility of the Department.

Staff recommends approval of the land acquisition, land transfer and easement acquisition.

4. Upper Iowa River Wildlife Management Area, Winneshiek County --Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation (INHF)

The Natural Resource Commission's approval is requested for the acquisition of a parcel of land located in Winneshiek County. The INHF offer the 26.69-acre parcel for \$95,500. The appraised value of the property is \$128,000.

Mark Tressel, Licensed Appraiser of Dubuque, Iowa, submitted the appraisal. Travis Baker negotiated the purchase agreement.

DNR-owned land, known as the Upper Iowa Wildlife Management Area, surrounds on three sides. The Upper Iowa River meanders through and around the land. This property is located in northwestern Winneshiek County, Iowa. The town of Decorah is located ten miles southeast of the property.

The property consists of restored prairie and timber that has building site potential as well as some potential for subdivision. Access to the land is from a gravel-based county road that runs through the south portion of the property.

This acquisition will be managed by the Conservation and Recreation Division in accord with the area management plan.

Funding used for this acquisition will be provided by REAP Public/Private Grants Program (Capital Link #152). The property will remain eligible for continued payment of property taxes assessed by Winneshiek County. Incidental closing costs will be the responsibility of the Department.

Staff recommends approval of the land acquisition.

5. Waterloo Creek WMA, Allamakee County -- Haugen Living Trust

The Natural Resource Commission's approval is requested to purchase a parcel of land located in northwestern Allamakee County. The Haugen Living Trust (Sallie Haugen DeReus, Trustee) offers this 80-acre tract for the appraised price of \$457,000.

Brian Linnemeyer, Licensed Appraiser of Indianola, Iowa, submitted the appraisal. Rick Hansen negotiated the purchase agreement.

This property is located just south of Dorchester. The tract is adjacent north and east of Waterloo Creek Wildlife Management Area. The nearly level to steep tract is comprised of 64 acres of forested land, 10.8 acres of cropland, 3 acres of building site, and 2.2 acres of roads. Waterloo Creek, a popular trout fishery that supports naturally reproducing populations of Brown Trout, bisects the central region of the property a distance of approximately 1,930 feet. In addition, an unnamed spring run originates near the building site and runs south approximately 1,000 feet into Waterloo Creek. Building improvements include an old 2-story house (currently vacant) and 3 small service buildings in poor condition. A paved, county road (A16) bisects the east quarter of the property and provides good access.

This aesthetic parcel will increase the Waterloo Creek WMA to 1,970 acres, and will provide for excellent public fishing, wildlife habitat, and improve water quality to this area. The Wildlife Bureau will manage the property in accord with the area management plan.

Acquisition funding will be provided by Dingell-Johnson (\$342,750), Fish Habitat Stamp (\$114,250) (Capital Link #24). No survey or fencing costs is anticipated. Incidental closing costs will be the responsibility of the Department.

Staff recommends approval of the land acquisition.

6. Sweet Marsh Wildlife Management Area, Bremer County – Scott and Beth Schellhorn

The Natural Resource Commission's approval is requested for the acquisition of a parcel of land located in Bremer County, adjacent to the north side of Sweet Marsh Wildlife Management Area. The 40.7-acre parcel is offered by Scott and Beth Schellhorn for the appraised price of \$41,000.

Sherman McNeal, Licensed Appraiser of Cedar Falls, Iowa, submitted the appraisal. Travis Baker negotiated the purchase agreement.

This property is located in north central Bremer County, Iowa. The small rural community of Frederika is approximately two and a half miles northwest. The topography ranges from nearly level to gently sloping. The entire property is encumbered by a NRCS Wetland Reserve Program conservation easement. The property is currently undergoing the process of wetland restoration. The restoration development is 100% cost-shared by the NRCS.

The property contains a small forested wetland area and the rest of the property will be developed to shallow wetlands and prairie as per NRCS specifications (Massasauga rattlesnake priority area) of the WRP program. The Wapsipinicon River corridor is severely lacking habitat outside of the riparian forest zone and this parcel would add some grassland to the corridor.

This acquisition will become part of the 2,800-acre Sweet Marsh Wildlife Management Area and will be managed by the Conservation and Recreation Division in accord with the area management plan.

Funding for the acquisition will be provided by the Cedar Wapsi NAWCA Fund (Capital Link #14). Survey and incidental closing costs will be the responsibility of the Department.

Staff recommends approval of the land acquisition.

7. Kellerton Bird Conservation Area, Ringgold County – Joe and Ann Meyer

The Natural Resource Commission's approval is requested for the acquisition of a parcel of land located in Ringgold County. This 80-acre tract is offered by Joe and Ann Meyer for the appraised price of \$162,000 with a two-year reservation of agricultural rights including two CRP payments on 4.7 acres.

Gary Thien, Licensed Appraiser, Thien Farm Management, Inc., Council Bluffs, Iowa, submitted the appraisal. Jerry Gibson negotiated the purchase agreement.

The property is located approximately six miles east and two miles south of Mount Ayr. The parcel is accessible from DNR property on the northern boundary, and is 1300 feet north of an existing DNR parcel. The property consists of 56.4 acres of tillable land, of which 4.7 acres are currently enrolled in the CRP (CP-21 buffer) at \$100.30 per acre per year; and 23.6 acres of timber. The average Corn Suitability Rating is 37.

After acquisition the DNR plans to seed 70 acres to native prairie plant species with 10 acres remaining in timber. Acquisition of the tract will enhance utilization by the Greater Prairie Chicken. The property will be managed by the Wildlife Bureau.

Acquisition funding will be provided by Federal State Wildlife Grant (\$81,000) and REAP License Plate (\$81,000) (Capital Link #162). The property will remain on the property tax roll. Survey of the southern boundary and incidental closing costs are the responsibility of the Department.

Staff recommends approval of the land acquisition.

Sally Jagnandan, Interim Administrator
Management Services Division
November 13, 2008

Attachment